



[Oliver Tambo, 1917-1993](#)

## Strategy and Tactics

*“The art of revolutionary leadership consists in providing leadership to the masses and not just to its most advanced elements... what appears to be 'militant' and 'revolutionary' can often be counter-revolutionary.”*

*“The enemy is as aware as we are that the side that wins the allegiance of the people, wins the struggle. It is naive to believe that oppressed and beleaguered people cannot temporarily, even in large numbers, be won over by fear, terror, lies, indoctrination, and provocation to treat liberators as enemies. In fact history proves that without*

*the most intensive all-round political activity this is the more likely result. It is therefore all the more vital that the revolutionary leadership is nation-wide and has its roots both inside and outside the actual areas of combat. **Above all, when victory comes, it must not be a hollow one. To ensure this we must also ensure that what is brought to power is not an army but the masses as a whole at the head of which stands its organised political leadership.***"

*"In the last resort it is only the success of **the national democratic revolution** which - by destroying the existing social and economic relationships - will bring with it a correction of the historical injustices perpetrated against the indigenous majority..."*

The above lines are taken from the ANC's [Morogoro] Strategy and Tactics document of 1969 (attached). It can be taken as the idea of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) in a nutshell. What must be brought to power is not an army, but the masses.

Politics is in the subjective realm. Politics is about the essence of subjectivity - freedom. But politics can only have an existence within the limits of objective realities.

Objectively, the NDR has a steadily-built organisational history of personalities, of events, and of documents. It has worked within the several class components, and at the same time it has changed by its action the balance of class forces in South Africa.

After the Freedom Charter, the original 1969 ANC Strategy and Tactics document is the next most prominent of all the NDR documents. In discussing the military activities of Umkhonto we Siswe (MK), the Morogoro S&T outlines alliance politics in terms that are sometimes crystal-clear, and sometimes not so clear. For an example of the latter, the class nature of the enemy is not described in very direct terms in the S&T document itself. Still, the Morogoro S&T is the best one to use as the basis for a discussion of the subjective political action of this period, and for some of its remarks on the underlying class realities.

The [new version of “Strategy and Tactics”](#) passed at the 2007 52<sup>nd</sup> National Conference of the ANC at Polokwane supplies a concise description of how, in the past, the enemy was defined, thus (from paragraph 96 of that document):

*“The liberation movement defined the enemy, on the other hand, as the system of white minority domination with the white community being the beneficiaries and defenders of this system. These in turn were made up of workers, middle strata and capitalists. Monopoly capital was identified as the chief enemy of the NDR.”*

Unfortunately this clarity of the latest S&T document is only in relation to the past. In the paragraphs that follow the above, it can be seen that the current S&T rehabilitates the monopoly capitalists as part of “concentric circles” of “drivers of change”. This new S&T was drafted by the “1996 class project”, i.e. those who were removed from the leadership at the same conference but who nevertheless managed to get their version of the S&T

passed. It holds out an imaginary scenario where the liberation movement mediates and manages relations between all classes in a static, eternal, and practically class-neutral “National Democratic Society”.

Whereas the 1969 S&T never mentioned any such static “National Democratic Society”, but was, on the contrary, unequivocally in favour of a bold transfer of class power.

*“In essence, a revolutionary policy is one which holds out the quickest and most fundamental transformation and transfer of power from one class to another,”* it said.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Strategy and Tactics, Morogoro, 1969, ANC](#).
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).